

Canadian Hip-Hop Supporting Stanley Tookie Williams

Written by Robert ID2207

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Wes "Maestro" Williams (who played Tony Bogard in the "Redemption" film) and hip-hop activist Raoul "Deejay Ra" Juneja were shown on the Canada's CityTV News and CTV Newsnet the night of December 13th to speak about their support of Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Stanley "Tookie" Williams, and why Tookie's books should be taught in Canadian schools and libraries.

A live 'save Tookie Canada' radio vigil was also held with guest Deejay Ra on Toronto campus radio station CHRY 105.5 FM in the hours leading up to the execution, playing a variety of speech clips and the hip-hop "Rap Redemption" Tookie mixtape tribute songs including "Letter To Stanley" by Muslim-Canadian rap artist Imaan Faith, a single co-written and co-produced by Deejay Ra.

In 2003 Barbara Becnel also arranged for actor Maestro, a rapper known in the 90's as the founder of Canadian hip-hop, to speak personally to Stanley "Tookie" Williams when the "Redemption" movie (starring Jamie Foxx as Tookie and Lynn Whitfield as Barbara) was being filmed in Toronto. Maestro currently stars in a Canadian sitcom "Metropia" and has been seen in many US films shot in Toronto such as "Conviction" with Omar Epps (a movie in which Deejay Ra also made a cameo).

On the 2004 "Redemption" DVD producer's commentary Ms. Becnel admits to getting emotional whenever she sees Maestro's performance as Tony Bogard, Tookie's former Crips lieutenant turned peace ambassador, since Tony was killed shortly after negotiating the truce between Crips and Bloods (known as "Hands Across Watts") thirteen years ago in 1992.

Tony Bogard's 1992 peace protocol work with Stanley "Tookie" Williams led to the gang homicide rate dropping from the 800 level to half that rate in a few short years, specifically in South Central from 466 in 1992 to 223 by 1998. The LA Times reported that "police and residents of Watts confirm that gang-on-gang slayings over emotional issues of turf boundaries or gang clothing have virtually disappeared."

"It felt like angels were on the set while we filmed Tookie's movie in Toronto," explains Maestro in his CTV interview. "It was a beautiful thing to be involved, and I told Tookie I was proud to make my contribution to his legacy - he's saved thousands and thousands of lives."

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To view DeeJay Ra and Maestro speaking about Tookie visit:

http://www.pulse24.com/News/Top_Story/20051212-009/page.asp

http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20051208/tookie_clemency_051208/20051209/

*Photography courtesy of CTV Networks.